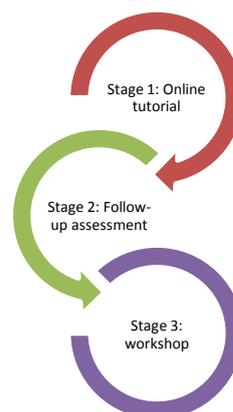


## Study Skills Centre: A blended approach to tackling plagiarism

The following case study describes a blended-learning approach to the issue of plagiarism that was designed in partnership between the School of Law and the Study Skills Centre.

An initial request for a lecture on plagiarism for Year 2 and 3 undergraduate students in the School of Law was fleshed out through discussion between faculty and Study Skills centre staff, and a response developed in order to ensure both that all students acquired a basic understanding of what constitutes plagiarism, and that students who struggled to distinguish between plagiarised material and acceptable use were provided with an opportunity to articulate their concerns and to receive additional support in a small-group setting. The intervention comprised three stages (see graphic), with Stages 1 and 2 designed to raise and test awareness of acceptable use of source material and to filter out students who did not need to proceed to Stage 3. This filtering process was seen as essential in terms of maintaining student motivation, and as making the discursive Stage 3 event practicable.



In Stage 1, all students were required to view *Don't cheat yourself*, an online tutorial developed by the Learning Development team at the University of Leicester. The tutorial, which has been adapted to eighteen different disciplines through the use of discipline-specific texts and referencing styles:

- a) explores what constitutes plagiarism;
- b) provides opportunities to distinguish plagiarised and non-plagiarised material;
- c) offers guidance on how to avoid plagiarism.

The tutorial is licenced under a creative commons licence and can be sat in twenty to thirty minutes.

Stage 2 required all students to complete a fifteen-minute task designed by the School. Building on the online tutorial, the assessment required students to read a paragraph-length extract from an academic source and then to study five different examples of how the extract had been incorporated into a fictitious piece of student work. Students were required to identify which, if any, of the examples plagiarised the original text, and to give reasons for their answer. Students who answered any of the five questions incorrectly, or whose reason for their answer did not indicate familiarity with the concept of plagiarism, were required to attend the Stage 3 workshop. In total, 25 per cent of the cohort were required to attend.

The Stage 3 seminar was timetabled for three parallel groups, each restricted to sixteen students. It ran for 60 minutes and provided an opportunity to explore:

- (a) the rationale for citation;
- (b) the nature of sources that Law students are likely to use in their assignments;
- (c) the types of information which tend to be cited;
- (d) note-taking practices that help to avoid plagiarism.

Through the small-group setting, students were able to raise questions that they had with respect to plagiarism and to explore, in some depth, textual practice relating to their own discipline.